

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

**Socialists win victory for workers' political rights**  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 73/NO. 13 APRIL 6, 2009

## U.S. gov't adds cops to border with Mexico

BY SETH GALINSKY

Using increasing drug cartel violence in Mexico as a pretext, Janet Napolitano, secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, announced March 24 at the White House that Washington is sending at least 450 more cops to the U.S.-Mexico border. It is also increasing the number of U.S. agents inside Mexico.

**'End militarization of U.S.-Mexico border!'**

—Amanda Ulman, SWP candidate for mayor of Houston, p. 7

The White House is still weighing a request by Texas governor Richard Perry to send 1,000 National Guard troops to the border.

The increase comes on top of the thousands of U.S. cops already there, Napolitano said, "a very, very heavy

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## Israel rulers craft new coalition government

BY SETH GALINSKY

March 25—Six weeks after elections to the parliament, a coalition has finally been put together to form a new government in Israel. No single party won more than 28 seats in the 120-member parliament.

In spite of its victory earlier this year in the war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip, the long delay reflects that Tel Aviv cannot solve the most fundamental problems it faces—the still-growing number of Arab citizens of Israel and their ongoing fight for equality and against discrimination and what to do about Gaza and the West Bank.

Binyamin Netanyahu, whose Likud party came in second place—one seat behind outgoing prime minister Ehud Olmert's Kadima—could have formed a ruling coalition with a slim majority much sooner. But he delayed in the hopes of putting together a "national unity" government that would exclude the most extremist of the

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## Industrial production, trade in rapid decline

Unemployment climbs as rulers attempt to shore up their credit and banking system



Militant/Nat London

Air France workers at March 19 "national day of protest" in Paris. As many as 3 million took to the streets across France to protest bosses' answer to capitalist economic crisis: rising unemployment and government cuts in social services. (See article on page 3.)

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Industrial production is plummeting, with bosses eliminating jobs at a very rapid pace. Combined with the worst decline in trade in 80 years this is battering the lives of millions of working people worldwide.

Capitalist politicians from President Barack Obama to those in the halls of Congress insist that the economic and financial crisis can be solved by the government sinking hundreds of

billions of dollars into banks, hedge funds, and related financial institutions to get lending and credit going again and that a new collapse can be avoided by stricter regulation. However, the economic crisis is not fundamentally the result of inadequate financial rules and regulations or frozen credit; it is rooted in declining rates of profit and the worldwide contraction of capitalist production and

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## 'Militant' supporters begin spring subscription campaign

BY BEN JOYCE

Supporters of the *Militant* newspaper around the world kicked off the spring subscription drive March 21 at demonstrations against the U.S.-led imperialist wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the Israeli government's assault against Palestinians in Gaza earlier this year. Selling subscriptions to the socialist newsweekly at actions of this kind, at workplaces, on campuses, and on union picket lines will be at the center of organizing to make the seven-week drive, which ends May 12, a success. During the first four days of the drive, 123 subscriptions have been sold.

A total of 45 participants in the antiwar rally in Washington got subscriptions as they discussed political issues on a variety of topics with *Militant* distributors on the buses, at the rally, and after the march.

"The economic crisis was a big thing on people's minds," said Ben O'Shaughnessy, organizer of the *Militant* subscription campaign in Chicago who also participated in the Washington demonstration. "There

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Militant/Betsey Stone

Supporters of *Militant* at Socialist Workers Party stand distribute socialist newsweekly and Pathfinder books during March 21 action in San Francisco against wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and in support of Palestinian struggle. Action kicked off *Militant* spring 2009 subscription campaign.

## FBI targets Somalis in Minneapolis

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

MINNEAPOLIS—The FBI has been interrogating members of the Somali community here about the "disappearances" of more than 20 Somali youth. A U.S. Senate committee held hearings March 11 on FBI claims

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## Toronto arts festival to honor Cuban Five revolutionaries

BY MICHEL DUGRÉ

MONTREAL—The "First International Festival of Poetry of Resistance in Honor of the Cuban Five" will take place in Toronto, April 24–30. The five are Cuban revolutionaries who have been unjustly held in U.S. prisons for the past decade, framed up on charges of "conspiracy to commit espionage," and in one case "conspiracy to commit murder."

Among the many poets attending the festival will be Atao Behramoglu from Turkey. He served 10 years in prison in the early 1980s for his alleged activities in the Turkish Peace Committee. Nancy Morejon and Orlando Silverio will participate from Cuba, as will Te Kupu, a Maori poet from New Zealand; Gilles Dossou-Gouin from Norway; Esther Celis from Colombia; Allison Hedge Coke, from the United States; Gary Geddes, from Victoria, British Columbia; and other poets and musicians from elsewhere in Canada. A theater compa-

ny from the National Autonomous University of Mexico will also attend.

The Cuban Five—Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González—have been locked up since September 1998. At the time of their

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# FBI targets Somalis

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that these youth may have been recruited to carry out terrorist attacks in the United States in the future. There are an estimated 70,000 to 200,000 Somalis living in the United States. Leaders in the Somali community say it has become clear that the FBI is seeking to create an atmosphere to force people to testify about their religious and political activities.

The FBI alleges that the youth have gone to Somalia to fight with al-Shabab, an armed Islamist group that was fighting to overthrow the Somali government in Mogadishu. That government, which came out of a U.S.-backed invasion of the country by thousands of Ethiopian troops in 2006, was replaced following UN-brokered elections earlier this year. The new government has the support of the main imperialist powers, including Washington, and is backed by thousands of African Union troops.

In February FBI Director Robert Mueller said that the Somali youth were “radicalized” by people in two mosques in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Mueller said Shirwa Ahmed carried out a suicide bombing last October in an attack by al-Shabab in northern Somalia. U.S. intelligence officials have claimed that the youth have joined al-Shabab and that this group has growing ties to al-Qaeda. Leaders of the Abubakar As-Saddique Islamic Center mosque in Minneapolis conducted an open house February 25 to allow scrutiny from the media and people from the community.

In addition to hearing the FBI’s claims, the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government

Affairs heard testimony from Andrew Liepman, deputy director of intelligence at the National Counterterrorism Center. Liepman warned, “We are concerned that if a few Somali American youth could be motivated to engage in such activities overseas, fellow travelers could return to the United States and engage in terrorist activities here.” Sen. Joseph Lieberman, chairman of the Senate committee, called the ongoing investigation the “most serious instance of homegrown terrorism in the United States.”

A number of local Somali leaders have urged cooperation with the FBI. However, it is clear that many Somalis are suspicious of the FBI and are not talking.

A young Somali, Omar Ali, told the *Militant*, “The FBI agents go up to people on the street here and put a microphone before their mouths and record what they say. They ask questions like, ‘What are you doing? Do you know any young people going back to Somalia to carry out suicide bombings?’”

Mohamed, a physician who is Somali, told the Associated Press that his cousin was detained for hours at the Minneapolis airport while being questioned about a January visit to Nairobi, Kenya, and which mosques he attended. “What is disturbing is the manner of the questions,” Mohamed said. “Nobody would ask, ‘Have you been to a church?’”

Tom Fiske, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Minneapolis, told the *Militant*, “The FBI investigations are violations of the democratic rights of people in the Somali com-

## Students protest education cuts in California



Militant/Betsey Stone

SACRAMENTO, California—Above is a contingent of students from the Chinatown branch of the City College of San Francisco at the March 16 demonstration here against cuts in funding for education. The students were among thousands from community colleges and other state schools throughout California who converged on the capitol building in Sacramento.

The new budget plan, passed on February 20 in the state legislature, includes cuts of at least 10,000 in the number of students who can attend state universities, with the possibility of thousands more.

The cost-of-living adjustments for community college faculty have been cut. Layoffs of teachers, cuts in the number of classes, and fee hikes are threatened.

Sara Kiono, a student at Chabot College in Hayward, described the hardship a rise in fees would pose. “I paid \$300 in fees this semester,” she says. “In addition, I work two jobs to support myself. A fee increase would seriously jeopardize my efforts to become a special education teacher.”

—BETSEY STONE

munities and of all working people. Using the specter of ‘terrorism’ they seek to legitimize spying and disruption of mosques, community organizations, and individuals within the Somali community. This will be used to legitimize the expansion of spying and disruption of the labor movement, the Black struggle, socialist organizations, and other working-class movements.”

The FBI is carrying out similar investigations in Somali communities in Boston; Columbus, Ohio; Portland, Maine; San Diego; and Seattle. Currently a grand jury in Minneapolis is subpoenaing testimony from people in the Somali community.

Somalis have reason to be suspicious of the FBI. In November 2001 the FBI, along with other U.S. gov-

ernment agencies, raided Somali businesses that transfer money from Somalis living here to family and friends in Somalia. The excuse was the same as what’s being presented for the current investigations, that the businesses had ties to terrorist groups. Subsequently, the government was forced to admit they had no evidence. This was small comfort to those whose businesses were raided, property confiscated or damaged, and shut down for many months. At the time there were protests by Somalis and others against the FBI action.

THE MILITANT

online

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## THE MILITANT

### Free the Cuban Five!

*For 10 years five Cuban revolutionaries have been incarcerated in U.S. prisons on frame-up “conspiracy” charges. The ‘Militant’ covers and supports their fight for freedom, which has placed them in the front ranks of the U.S. class struggle today.*



The Cuban Five from left: René González, Antonio Guerrero, Ramon Labañino, Fernando González, Gerardo Hernández.

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# Chinese-Cuban generals' book presented in China

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The Chinese edition of *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution* was launched in Beijing at a meeting of 80 people March 13. The Cuban daily *Granma* reported on the event, as did the Spanish-language edition of *Xinhua*, the Chinese daily.

Edited by Mary-Alice Waters, the book was published by Pathfinder Press in English and Spanish in 2005. It is based on interviews with Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sio Wong. Each became a general in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces. As teenage rebels they threw themselves into the clandestine struggle and 1956-58 revolutionary war in Cuba that brought down the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Ba-

tista and opened the door to the socialist revolution in Latin America. In the book the three generals describe the historic place of Chinese immigration to Cuba and more than five decades of revolutionary action and internationalism, from Cuba to Angola, to Nicaragua, and Venezuela.

The Beijing book presentation took place at the offices of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC). *Granma* reported that the new edition "is the product of collaboration between the CPAFFC, the Chinese International Culture Art Center, and the Cuban embassy in Beijing." It was translated to Chinese by Wang Lusha and Wang Ping and published by the Intellectual Property Publishing House in Beijing.

At the launching, according to



Carlos Miguel Pereira, Cuban ambassador to China, speaking in Beijing at March 13 launching of Chinese edition of *Our History Is Still Being Written*.

*Granma*, "Li Xiaolin, vice-president of the Association, noted that Cuba was one of the first countries entered by Chinese immigrants in the 19th century, and that many joined the struggle against colonial oppression,

as their descendants did later against the dictatorship."

Commenting on Li's talk, *Xinhua* reported, "In October 1931 Cuba put up a plaque in the capital, Havana, to commemorate the contributions made by Cubans of Chinese origin to Cuba's independence. Inscribed on it is the phrase, 'There was not a single Chinese-Cuban deserter; there was not a single Chinese-Cuban traitor.'"

In his remarks, Carlos Miguel Pereira, the Cuban ambassador to China, noted these were the words of Gen. Gonzalo de Quesada, a leader of Cuba's war for independence from Spain and secretary of the Cuban Revolutionary Party led by José Martí, reported *Granma*.

The paper added that "Zhang Mingzhi, president of the Chinese International Culture Art Center, said his institution was proud to have participated in this project."

## French workers protest layoffs, social cuts

BY NAT LONDON

PARIS—Millions of workers flooded the streets of France March 19 to protest deepening unemployment and cuts in social services resulting from the worldwide capitalist economic crisis. This was the second national day of action backed by the unions in less than two months.

## Production

Continued from front page

trade, the scope of which has not been seen since the 1930s.

According to the International Monetary Fund, factories around the world are making the sharpest and swiftest cuts to production ever, reported Bloomberg News.

In the United States, industrial production in February declined for the fourth straight month, down 11 percent from a year earlier. This is the biggest drop since 1975. Output has declined in 10 of the last 12 months. Factories were operating at just 67.4 percent of capacity last month, the lowest level since records began being kept in 1948. Once mining and utilities operations are included, this figure inches up slightly to 70.9 percent, matching a record low set in December 1982.

Since the recession began in December 2007, U.S. bosses have eliminated the jobs of 1.3 million factory workers, according to Bloomberg News.

For European countries using the euro the decline in industrial production was even greater than in the United States. In January it was down a record 17 percent compared to a year earlier. Factory production in Japan that month was down by 31 percent from the previous year. In Poland, it declined by 14.3 percent in February and in Brazil, by 15 percent.

ThyssenKrupp, Germany's largest steel company, is planning to cut more than 3,000 "permanent" jobs, reported the *Financial Times*. This is in addition to reducing working hours and eliminating the jobs of temporary workers.

France's second-largest automobile

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Eight national union confederations billed the March 19 action as a "national day of protest" rather than a general strike, unlike the call for a one-day strike in January. Nevertheless, millions of workers responded by striking March 19, including railroad, gas and electric, and hospital workers, as well as teachers and civil servants. Some 30 percent of Air France flights out of Orly Airport were cancelled. High-speed rail traffic was cut by 50 percent on most lines.

As many as 3 million people, or 5 percent of the population, participated in the 213 protest actions held across the country, reported the *International Herald Tribune* and the unions. Public opinion polls show 78 percent of the population supported the day of action. Police put the number of participants at 1.2 million, still larger than the 1.1 million they reported for protests in January.

Large contingents of high school and college students joined teachers and professors to protest cuts in education. One banner carried by university professors protesting cutbacks in the research budget announced, "Physicists in struggle!" Big contingents of hospital workers protested similar cuts in medical-care funding and services. Many workers in transportation and public services also participated. Workers at auto plants

such as Peugeot and Renault organized contingents.

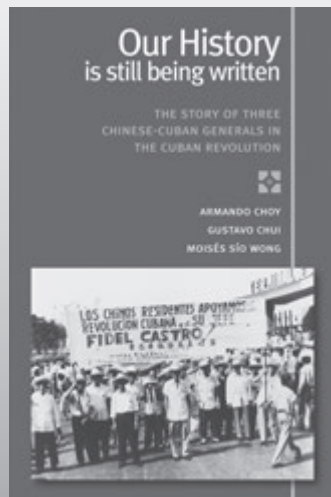
The struggle at the Continental tire factory in Clairoux north of Paris attracted a great deal of attention in the days leading up to the national action. In September 2007 the 1,120 workers at the plant agreed to an increase in the workweek from 35 hours to 40 without an increase in pay. In return the company promised to not close the plant.

In spite of this, Continental bosses announced March 11 that the plant would be closing within a year. This would force the closure of a host of smaller subcontracting plants, putting an estimated 4,000 workers in all out of work. Workers went on strike March 11, chased management out of the plant, and refused to allow the bosses back in until an agreement was signed March 23.

Responding to the March 19 protests, French president Nicolas Sarkozy said, "The demonstrations were large and we have to take that into account, but the country wasn't paralyzed."

After the first national day of action in January, Sarkozy announced a series of measures, including tax reductions for low-income families, amounting to 2.6 billion euros (1 euro = US\$1.37). This time, Prime Minister François Fillon said that there would be no further relief measures from the government.

### Our History Is Still Being Written



A chapter in the chronicle of the Cuban Revolution, as told by those on the front lines of that ongoing epic. Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sio Wong talk about the historic place of Chinese immigration to Cuba, as well as more than five decades of revolutionary action and internationalism, from Cuba to Angola, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. Through their stories the social and political forces that gave birth to the Cuban nation and still shape our epoch unfold. We see how millions of ordinary men and women like them changed the course of history, becoming different human beings in the process.

Available online or from a distributor listed on page 6

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## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

### CALIFORNIA

**San Francisco**  
**The Accelerating Crisis of Industrial Production and Trade—Why the Working Class Needs to Take Political Power.** Meeting to benefit Militant Fund. Speaker: Norton Sandler, member of Socialist Workers Party National Committee. Sun., April 5. Dinner, 5:30 p.m.; program, 6:30 p.m. 5482 Mission Street. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

### GEORGIA

**Atlanta**  
**Celebrate Spring Militant Fund Drive.** Speaker: Dave Prince, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., April 4. Dinner, 7 p.m.; program, 8 p.m. 465 Boulevard SE, Suite 201 A. Tel.: (404) 627-3704.

### MINNESOTA

**Minneapolis**  
**The Struggle for a Democratic, Secular Palestine and Fights by Toilers in Israel Today.** Fri., April 3. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 1311 1/2 E. Lake St., 2nd floor. Tel.: (612) 729-1205.

### NEW JERSEY

**Newark**  
**Conspiracy Mania and Jew-Baiting: A Working-Class Response.** Speaker: Sara Lobman, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 3. Dinner, 7 p.m.; program, 8 p.m. 168 Bloomfield Ave., 2nd floor. Tel.: (973) 481-0077.

### SWEDEN

**Stockholm**  
**30 Years Since the Workers and Farmers Revolution in Grenada.** Speakers: James Wardally, trade union leader during Grenada Revolution; Anita Östling, meat packer and representative of Communist League. Bildhuggarvägen 17, 121 44 Johanneshov (close to subway station "Globen"). Tel.: (08) 31 69 33.







## ON THE PICKET LINE

### **Steel workers picket Merck over cuts in union jobs**

RAHWAY, New Jersey—More than 300 workers at Merck & Co., one of the world's largest pharmaceutical corporations, picketed in front of the plant here March 16 to protest company demands to outsource 178 union jobs. Some 480 members of the United Steelworkers of America Local 4-575 work at the Rahway facility. Merck is also trying to outsource work at its plants in West Point, Pennsylvania, and Elkton, Virginia.

"We'd be doing the same work in the same place but we wouldn't be in the union, our pay would be cut in half, and we'd lose our benefits," Cheryl Stevens said. "And that's *if* they decide to offer us a job," Betty Woodward added. Stevens has worked in facility services for eight years and Woodward in lab services for nine. Stevens and Woodward noted that a new contracting company is already setting up, even though the union contract doesn't expire until April 30.

Workers circled the two blocks in front of the main entrance to the plant behind a large Steelworkers banner and an American flag. Handmade signs included "Shame on Merck," "We still care about Merck's future, why don't they care about ours," and "No scab labor."

—Sara Lobman

## Cuban Five

**Continued from front page**

arrests in Miami they were gathering information on right-wing Cuban exile groups that carried out violent attacks on Cuba with Washington's complicity.

The festival opens April 24 with a gala of poetry and music. The following day will feature panel discussions on topics such as the role of poets in political and social resistance and "The Law As a Weapon: the Cuban Five, Pakistan, the U.S. and Canada." That day will end with a "Homage to Poets of Resistance Past."

Throughout the following days, events will take place all around Toronto, in churches, community centers, the Toronto Women's Bookstore, and other locations.

On April 26 there will be a poetry reading and music with the Krittibas Bengali Literary Group. Later that day the South Asian People's Forum hosts the Faiz Peace Festival, honoring the prominent Pakistani poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz. He was arrested in 1951 and spent four years in prison, charged with conspiring to carry out a coup. His daughter, Muneeza Hashmi, is trying to get a visa from the Canadian government to participate in the festival.

On April 28 is a cartoon exhibit by the Art Service Union, which will include cartoons by Gerardo Hernández.

On April 29 there will be a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution, with funds raised going to the Hurricane Fund for Cuba.

The festival is being prepared through 10 pre-festival events, including a reading and music evening March 24, for which the Davenport-Perth Neighborhood Center has issued a call for local residents to participate.

Admission to all events is free except the Faiz Peace Festival, which costs \$10. For more information write to [resistancepoetryfest@gmail.com](mailto:resistancepoetryfest@gmail.com).

### **Regional airline unions in Japan hold one-day strike**

Some 600 pilots and other airline workers struck Japan's largest domestic airline March 18. The one-day strike forced the cancellation of 137 flights. The last time the airline, All Nippon Airways or ANA, had cancelled flights due to a strike was in April 2007.

ANA plans to cut \$142 million in labor costs by slashing wages and bonuses, reported Bloomberg. The four unions that struck the airline said that they were forced to act to prevent the difference in wages and salaries being paid between the main airline and its subsidiaries from widening. The union and the company were also unable to reach agreement over safety procedures and work conditions.

—Sam Manuel

### **Bus drivers in Ireland reject 'cost cuts,' layoffs**

Workers in two unions at Dublin Bus in Ireland voted by wide margins March 19 to reject a "cost cutting" plan

## Greece: march protests attack on union organizer

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece—On the occasion of International Women's Day, nearly 200 people gathered here March 7 to protest the violent assault on Konstantina Kouneva, a Bulgarian immigrant and trade union organizer.

The protesters marched to the Greek parliament and then to the hospital where she is being treated, demanding that the authorities pursue Kouneva's attackers. The protest was called by the Bulgarian Cultural Center, Union of African Women, Women's Network of the Coalition of the Radical Left, Amnesty International—Women's Rights Section, and others.

It was the second protest to demand that authorities find and prosecute the thugs. On January 22 more than 1,000 joined a protest organized by a number of trade union locals.

Last December, while on her way



Militant/Sara Lobman

**United Steelworkers picket outside Merck drug company in Rahway, New Jersey, March 16.**

by the company to remove 120 buses from service and lay off 160 new drivers. It also calls for other changes in working conditions and job security, reported a RTÉ news program.

RTÉ also reported that the company expressed its disappointment with the vote and said it would now have

no choice but to implement the cuts and layoffs.

Willie Noone, branch organizer for SIPTU, one of two unions at the company, said workers would take strike action if the company proceeds with the plan.

—Sam Manuel

home, thugs attacked Kouneva. They pushed her face into a bucket of sulfuric acid and then forced her to drink it. She remains hospitalized in a coma after sustaining permanent damage to her eyes, esophagus, and other organs.

Kouneva is a janitor and general secretary of the Pan Attik Union of Janitors and Home Cleaners. She worked for the firm OIKOMET, which subcontracts cleaners for government facilities and private companies. At the time of her attack, Kouneva was working under a subcontract for the rail transit company in Athens.

According to a statement by Migrants Forum, an immigrants rights group, Kouneva was targeted for her efforts to organize immigrant and Greek workers in a common struggle. It said the attack was part of the "circumvention of basic labor rights in

the field and a reprisal by the contractors due to the union activities of the victim."

According to the Migrants Forum, Kouneva was organizing coworkers to refuse to sign receipts saying they were paid higher wages than what they had actually received, and to oppose the company's pocketing of their Christmas bonus.

Janitors are mainly immigrant women workers. Companies take advantage of their status to underpay them and violate labor laws.

According to the daily *Eleftherotypia*, Kouneva's attorneys say the police have carried out an insufficient investigation and are instead concentrating their "investigation" on her immediate associates and amongst immigrants. The main opposition parties PASOK and Coalition of the Left have spoken out on Kouneva's behalf.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



**April 6, 1984**

LONDON, England, March 26—British miners scored some important victories last week as their strike against the government's plans to close more than 20 mines and lay off over 20,000 miners in the next year reached a crucial stage.

Now in its third week, the strike has spread to include more than 150,000 miners—85 percent of the total—in England, Scotland, and Wales.

Squads of "flying pickets" organized from Yorkshire, South Wales, Kent, and Scotland spread throughout the country shutting down pits, stopping the movement of coal, and building solidarity actions in Britain's major cities.

"First of all, we meet the police everywhere we go," one miner told me. "In spite of that, we've already got North Wales shut down." He was referring to the two coal mines in North Wales that were successfully picketed out early this week.



**April 6, 1959**

The labor-exploiting class that owns the banks, factories, mines, and mills of this country claims the "right" to deprive workers of the only means they have to provide food and shelter for their families—by working for wages. This "right" to cut off the means of livelihood of workers is accepted as a matter of course by the present government of the United States.

This is the real meaning of the callous disregard of cries for help from the unemployed by the White House and Congress. And this is why they act as if five million jobless are a normal part of a "healthy" economic "shakeout."

The labor movement is beginning to champion a different concept, the concept that every man, woman, and child has the inalienable right to a decent standard of living—regardless of the ups and downs of the capitalist business cycle.



**April 7, 1934**

Last year's May Day demonstrations were held under the slogan of solidarity with the German workers and against advancing Fascism. Since that time the heroic fight of the Austrian workers and socialists was drowned in blood and now murderous Clerical Fascism with its program of black reaction rules in Austria.

Decaying capitalism, with no other way out of its crisis, is resorting to the arming of murderous bands for the crushing of every semblance of independent working-class organization. Faced with a divided working class, it marches forward everywhere. The heroism of Communists, Socialists, and trade union members in Austria, in Italy, and in the prison camps of Hitler, serve but to show the devotion, courage, and readiness to struggle in the ranks of the workers, which, if united, could smash the Fascist menace in one country after another.



# U.S. capitalism arose upon conquest of Indians

*Printed below is an excerpt from Genocide against the Indians—Its Role in the Rise of U.S. Capitalism by George Novack. The pamphlet is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for April. The conflict between the European settlers and the Indians was a social struggle between two incompatible systems of production, forms of property, and ways of life, explains Novack. The piece quoted is from the chapter "The Indians and the struggle for possession of the land." Copyright © 1970 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY GEORGE NOVACK

In their catalogue of crimes against humanity, the spokesmen for capitalism include the expropriation of property without "just compensation," the use of violence to overturn established regimes, and the resort to extralegal measures. They add, as the crime of crimes, the extermination of entire populations, for which the term "genocide" has recently been coined. These self-professed humanitarians ascribe such aims above all to "Marxist" and "Communist" devils. In contrast they hold up the angelic respect for property rights, love of peace, regard for law and order, preference for gradual change by democratic consent,



Apache Indian prisoners near Nueces River, Texas, in September 1886 being taken by train to Florida.

and other virtues presumably inculcated by American "free enterprise."

This is a handy set of principles to justify the capitalist regime while defaming its opponents. But all these principles have little application to the conduct of the bourgeoisie in American history. They have been honored, if at all, more in the breach than in the observance.

Historians fired by zeal to indict the opponents of capitalism for these offenses should first direct their attention to the ancestors of contemporary American capitalism. No class in American history invaded the property rights of others more ruthlessly, employed violence so readily, and benefited so extensively by revolutionary actions as has the American bourgeoisie on its road to power.

The precursors of the monopolists acquired their property by expropriating the Indians, the British crown along with its Loyalist lackeys, and the slaveholders, not to mention their continued stripping of the small farmers and self-employed workers. They effected these disposessions of other people's property not simply by peaceful, legal, or democratic means, but in extremely violent, high-handed, and militaristic ways. Wherever they could not get what they went after by bargaining or money, they took by main force or direct action.

The conquest of the Indians, as we have seen, takes its place in this series of events as the earliest and crassest case of the rapacity, ferocity, and duplicity with which the bourgeois forces smashed the

impediments on the way to their objectives. They themselves committed the supreme crime they falsely attribute to the aims of revolutionary socialists. The extermination of the Indian was the outstanding example of "genocide" in modern American history—and it was the first rung in the ladder by which the bourgeoisie climbed to the top.

The transmission of the continent into their hands was not accomplished by peaceful agreements. It is common knowledge that virtually every treaty made with the Indians for over four hundred years was broken by the architects of the American nation. By brute force, by the most perfidious deeds, by wars of extermination, they settled the question of who was to own and occupy the continent and to rule it. The treatment of the Indians exemplifies to what lengths the owners of private property can—and will—go in promoting their material interests.

The methods by which the white invaders disposed of the Indian problem had far-reaching results. Ancient Indian society was shattered and eradicated and powerful masters placed over them and over North America. The main social substance of that sweeping change consisted in the conversion and division of tribal property in land, owned in common and cooperatively used, into private property. This continent passed from the loose network of tribal communities into the hands of kings, landed proprietors, planters, merchants, capitalists, small

farmers, and town dwellers who directed and composed the new society.

The conflict between the red man and the white is usually represented as essentially *racial* in character. It is true that their mutual antagonism manifested itself and was carried on by both sides under the guise of racial hatred. But their war to the death was at bottom a *social* struggle, a battle for supremacy between two incompatible systems of production, forms of property, and ways of life. Like all profound social struggles the scramble for the sources and acquisition of wealth was at its root. In this case, the chief prize was individual ownership and "free" disposition of the land and its products.

These material stakes account for the obdurateness of the conflict which persisted through four centuries and for the implacable hostility displayed by white settlers *of all nationalities* toward the Indians *of all tribes*. This was also responsible in the last analysis for the impossibility of any harmony or enduring compromise between the two. One or the other had to yield and go under.

That is how the materialist school of Marxism interprets the cruel treatment accorded the Indians and the reasons for their downfall. If this explanation is accepted, prevailing views of early American history must be discarded. Schoolchildren, and not they alone, are taught nowadays that the first great social change in this country came from the Patriots' fight for independence in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. In the light of the foregoing analysis, this long-standing misconception has to be rejected.

*The colonial uprising, for all its importance, was neither the first social transformation in America, nor can it be considered the most fundamental one. It was preceded, interwoven, and followed by the white invasion and penetration which overthrew the Indian tribal network. This process of struggle, undertaken to install the rule of private property and its corresponding institutions in place of communal property and its specific institutions, was an even more radical social upheaval than the contest between the colonists and the mother country.*

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# Academics, others plan for Mexico conference on Martí, Lincoln, Juárez

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

“We are expecting about 200 people from around Mexico to participate in the conference. And more will be coming from the United States, Canada, Cuba, Venezuela, and other countries,” said María de la Paz Quintanilla. She was describing plans for the International Conference on Martí, Juárez, and Lincoln in the Heart of Our America, which will take place May 18–19 in Monterrey, Mexico.

De la Paz, chair of the conference organizing committee, said in a March 22 phone interview from Monterrey that the gathering will be “a dialogue among participants from Mexico, the United States, Cuba, and other countries in the Americas. It will draw on the ideas represented by José Martí, Benito Juárez, and Abraham Lincoln” and their political legacy for social struggles throughout the Americas today.

The conference will be held on the campus of the Autonomous University of Nuevo León. Professors and graduate students from the schools of philosophy and social work, among others, will be participating.

Several dozen delegates are coming from universities in the western Mexico states of Colima and Nayarit, de la Paz reported. Others will come from the University of Guadalajara’s Martí Studies Program, the Autonomous University of Coahuila, and three Mexico City campuses—the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), Metropolitan Autonomous University (UAM), and Latin American School of Social Sciences (FLACSO).

A featured speaker will be well-known Mexican writer Pablo González

Casanova. Another special guest is Raúl Vera, bishop of Saltillo in Coahuila state and a prominent indigenous rights advocate.

There will be about 20 delegates from Cuba, including Dr. Ana Sánchez, director of the Center for Martí Studies, and Rubén Zardoya, rector of the University of Havana, as well as professors from the universities of Havana and Cienfuegos. Ten people are coming from Venezuela, two from Colombia, and at least one from the Dominican Republic.

A keynote presentation will be given by Armando Hart, an historic leader of the Cuban Revolution and today director of the Martí Program in Cuba. Hart has written extensively on Martí, including his recent book *José Martí: Apóstol de Nuestra América* (Apostle of Our America).

The two-day conference includes plenary sessions and workshops. Several panels will take up the relevance of the political legacy of Juárez, Lincoln, and Martí. They were leaders, respectively, of the Mexican revolutionary struggle against the landed oligarchy and European intervention in the 1850s and ’60s; the second American revolution—the civil war that ended chattel slavery—in



Cuban *mambises* (independence fighters) during 1895–98 war against Spanish colonial rule. José Martí was one of central leaders of Cuban independence struggle, which was intertwined with fight to abolish slavery.

the 1860s; and the Cuban independence war of 1895 against Spanish colonial rule.

Martí, warning that U.S. imperialist domination would block the popular aspirations for which Latin America’s independence struggles were waged, summoned the people of “Our America” to conquer their “second independence.” In a letter written the day before his death in combat on May 19, 1895, Martí said his goal was, “through winning Cuba’s independence, to prevent the United States from expanding throughout the Antilles and falling with greater force on our American lands.”

To register or for more information

on the May 18–19 conference, write to [alma2008@mail.uh.edu](mailto:alma2008@mail.uh.edu) or [martijuarezlinconferencia@gmail.com](mailto:martijuarezlinconferencia@gmail.com). Or call organizers in Monterrey at (011-52-81) 8300-4169.

New hotel information is now available. Special room rates for conference participants have been arranged with the Howard Johnson Hotel in Monterrey’s Macroplaza. To make a reservation, e-mail Leticia Mora at [reservaciones@hojomonterrey.com.mx](mailto:reservaciones@hojomonterrey.com.mx) or call (011-52-81) 8380-6030.

More information on the conference will be posted to a new web site, currently under construction, at [www.conferenciamartijuarezlincoln.com](http://www.conferenciamartijuarezlincoln.com).

## Socialist denounces U.S. militarization of border

*Amanda Ulman, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Houston, released the following statement March 15 in response to the stepped-up militarization of the U.S. border with Mexico. Ulman is 33 and works as a sewing machine operator. She has been active in building protests*

*on May 1 calling for immediate and unconditional legalization of undocumented immigrants.*

The Socialist Workers campaign joins with others in calling for an end to the militarization of the U.S. border with Mexico.

The crisis in Mexico is being used by the U.S. rulers, under the banners of “homeland security” and “fighting terrorism,” as an excuse to further attack the rights of working people to organize and act in our own defense.

The Socialist Workers campaign demands the repeal of the Patriot Act; an end to stepped-up government wiretapping, spying, and harassment; defense of the rights of the accused and convicted; and abolition of the death penalty.

To maximize their profits, bosses use the status of undocumented workers to drive down wages and worsen working conditions for all

working people.

But immigrant workers bring with them valuable experience in union and other social battles in their countries. In this country they have been in the forefront of the fight to strengthen the unions, as in the case of the workers who led the sit-in at Republic Windows and Doors in Chicago when the company attempted to lay them off without compensation. The fight for legalization of undocumented workers is an integral part of improving the conditions for all workers and working farmers.

The massive mobilizations for legalization—especially those on May 1 over the past three years—show how working people united in struggle can make significant gains. They serve as an example of how to fight for dignity on the job, better wages, and health and safety protection.

Through these fights, workers

**Continued on page 8**

## U.S. cops at Mexican border

**Continued from front page**  
federal presence.”

“I anticipate that there will be more announcements,” she said, “This is really the first wave of things that will be happening.”

Napolitano, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and Attorney General Eric Holder will all visit Mexico to talk with Mexican government officials in coming days, reported the *Washington Post*.

The announcement shed some light on the massive operation already in place. The plan “involves almost every agency in the federal government,” said Deputy Secretary of State Jim Steinberg at the White House press conference.

Napolitano said that 100 agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) would be sent to the border during the next 45 days. ATF agents inside Mexico will increase from five to nine. The number of joint Border Enforcement Security Task Force “BEST” units—made up of FBI, Border police, ICE immigration agents, U.S. Coast Guard, and Mexico’s Secretariat of Public Security—will double to include 190 agents.

The number of ICE “attachés” inside Mexico, mostly in Mexico City,

will rise 50 percent, from 24 to 36. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, which has 11 offices inside Mexico, is adding 16 new positions in the southwest border areas.

ICE “Border Liaison Officers,” who work directly with Mexican police, will quadruple from 10 to 40.

The U.S. Customs and Border Police are sending additional Z-Backscatter mobile X-ray units to the border along with additional “cross-trained” canine teams that can sniff out weapons and money. According to its manufacturer, the “unobtrusive” vans with Backscatter units have unique “drive-by” capabilities that allow imaging “suspect vehicles” while in motion and can detect “stowaways.”

U.S. agents are also inspecting all trains going to Mexico along all eight cross-border rail lines. Most of the moves are continuations or expansions of programs set up during the George W. Bush administration.

Thousands of National Guard troops were stationed along the Mexico border from May 2006 to July 2008 as part of a crackdown on undocumented workers. Washington has often used the “war on drugs” as an excuse to arrest immigrant workers for the sole “crime” of being in the United States without papers.



Militant/Jacque Henderson  
Amanda Ulman, right, Socialist Workers candidate for Houston mayor, campaigns February 28.



# Socialists win victory for workers' political rights

BY JOHN STUDER

WASHINGTON—The Socialist Workers Party election campaigns won an important victory March 19 when the Federal Election Commission voted to extend the exemption for the party's campaigns from requirements to report the names of financial contributors and vendors.

The exemption applies to the Socialist Workers National Campaign Committee and local committees supporting Socialist Workers candidates. The FEC voted 5-1 to extend the disclosure exemption until the end of 2012, through the next presidential election.

The SWP's fight for an exemption is part of its decades-long support for the rights of workers, farmers, and their organizations to engage in political activity—including elections—free from government, boss, and right-wing harassment.

The party was represented by Michael Krinsky and Lindsey Frank, attorneys at the law firm of Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky & Lieberman. Frank joined Norton Sandler, chair of the Socialist Workers National Campaign Committee, in attending the hearing.

## 'Reasonable probability of threats'

"[T]he Commission concludes that there is a reasonable probability that contributors to, and vendors doing business with, the SWP and committees supporting SWP candidates would face threats, harassment, or reprisals if their names and information about them were disclosed," the draft Advisory Opinion adopted by the FEC stated.

The four-year extension of the exemption granted by the FEC is two years less than the six-year extension the commission approved in 1990, 1996, and 2003.

"Although the evidence presented by the requestor demonstrates some continued incidents of violence and harassment, those incidents appear to be of lesser magnitude than those referenced in court opinions and prior [Advisory Opinions] granting the exemption," the draft adopted by the FEC argued.

After preparing its draft, the FEC's general counsel made it available to the SWP for comment. In a letter sent

to the commission on March 17, the SWP's attorneys agreed with the recommendation to extend the exemption but took issue with the statement that the party faces harassment of a "lesser magnitude."

## 77 incidents

The letter noted that the evidence submitted with this year's application was "more extensive" than the last two, including 77 incidents of attack, harassment, or threats, incidents that were "equally, if not more, forceful."

Two commissioners took the floor to discuss the draft before the vote. The commission is composed of six members, three Democrats and three Republicans.

Ellen Weintraub, a Democrat, favored extending the exemption for a shorter duration. "I hope that someday, perhaps next time, this will not be necessary," she said. "We are a long way from the McCarthy era today."

Steven Walther, another Democrat and the current commission chair, argued that the exemption should be terminated. "I believe that no other party has ever asked for an exemption," he said, adding that it might be time to end this one exception to the fact that "everyone else has to disclose."

Walther pointed to two recent news articles: "We're all socialists now" in *Newsweek* magazine and a *Washington Post* op-ed piece entitled "Obama's no socialist. I should know," written by Billy Wharton of the Socialist Party USA.

He argued that these articles show that socialist views are part of the national debate generated by capitalism's economic crisis. "Maybe some people don't like seeing a newspaper like the *Militant* in demonstrations outside their office," Walther added, but today socialism is more "mainstream." That means, he said, "More scrutiny is in order."

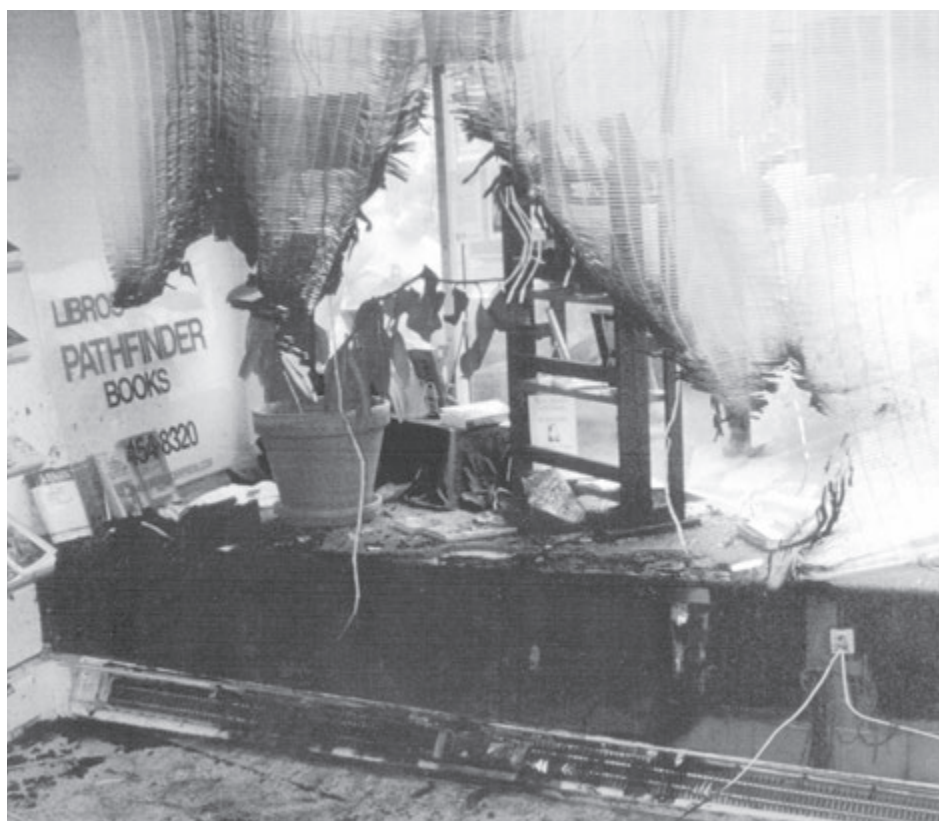
At a minimum, he argued, cutting the length of the exemption to four years was required.

Following the brief discussion, the commission voted 5-1, with Walther voting no, to grant the four-year extension.

## Documentation of gov't disruption

In their application to extend the exemption, the attorneys for the SWP had submitted three documents presenting the history of government spying and disruption aimed at the party, the record of government harassment of party members, firings of candidates and campaign supporters, firebombings and physical attacks on campaign offices, cop efforts to shut down campaigning, and threats against campaign headquarters and supporters over the past six years.

In 2004 the Socialist Workers campaign headquarters in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, was firebombed. This was one of the most severe attacks against the party in decades. It received wide publicity in the region, and as part of posting the material submitted by the SWP publicly on its Web site, the FEC put up a video of the television news coverage of the attack. An FEC staff



Militant

Socialist Workers campaign office in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, after it was firebombed Sept. 11, 2004. Federal Election Commission ruled 5-1 that contributors to party could face reprisals if their names were disclosed.

member said that this was the first time the commission had ever posted a video.

The SWP submitted evidence of nine other physical attacks on SWP campaign offices or campaigners.

During the last six years, three SWP candidates and one campaign supporter were fired from their jobs for their political activity. In three of these cases, the local unemployment agency rejected the claims of the companies that fired them and awarded them unemployment benefits.

In July 2007 right-wingers, including members of the militia group called the Minutemen, mounted a large and threatening mobilization outside a Militant Labor Forum in Des Moines, Iowa, that featured a program in defense of legalization for immigrant workers. The rightists—using a bullhorn—harassed and attempted to provoke those attending the forum, saying, "Where's the militancy? We thought you were militant."

## Homeland Security 'no fly' list

In their March 17 letter to the FEC, attorneys for the SWP submitted a new declaration from James Harris, twice presidential candidate for the SWP, and the party's recent candidate for mayor of Los Angeles.

Harris explained how for the last five years he has been on the Department of Homeland Security "no fly" list, sub-

jected to special processing when he arrives at the airport. Harris explained that he has missed flights while being held back for further investigation.

The SWP also presented evidence showing the substantial expansion of government spying, electronic surveillance, and use of informers against political activists over the past 10 years. From the FBI to local "red squads," cop agencies have burgeoned under the umbrella of "homeland security."

"Winning the extension of the exemption is an important victory for workers' rights," Sandler said after the hearing. "It helps defend the right of workers and farmers to participate in politics with less interference, harassment, and disruption from the federal government, local cops, and employers."

"The hearing also made it clear that we will face a bigger fight to get the exemption renewed when it comes up for review next time, in 2012," Sandler added. "They argued that the McCarthy period is history and the government should get on with prying and spying. The rulers do not use anti-communism now as their chief rationale for spying. Instead they say they need more spies, informers, and cops in order to 'fight terrorism.'"

"Their real target is the working class as it finds ways to respond to the rulers' attacks as the capitalist economic system contracts," said Sandler.

# Socialist denounces border cops

Continued from page 7

break down the boss-imposed barriers based on race, gender, and immigration status. We can more easily see ourselves as an international class with our own interests, separate and opposed to the interests of the ruling class that exploits us.

As the capitalist crisis deepens, throwing millions out of work, the fight for immediate legalization of undocumented workers, with no penalties or conditions, involves more than basic working-class solidarity. It is a matter of life or death for the labor movement. In order to survive the blows of the crisis the unions must organize all the unorganized.

To confront the deepening economic crisis, the mounting layoffs, cuts in health care and education, and greater

assaults on workers' rights, working people need to take political power out of the hands of the ruling billionaire families that live off the wealth that our class alone produces.

The Socialist Workers campaign calls for an end to all factory raids, "no-match" Social Security letters, secret detentions of immigrant workers, and deportations. Immigrant workers should have full rights to education and medical care. For immediate legalization for all!

We will be joining with others on May 1 this year to take the day off work and go into the streets, raising these demands in the interests of all working people. As a garment worker I will be campaigning to build the May Day actions among my coworkers and I encourage fellow workers to do the same.

## For further reading

### FBI on Trial

by Margaret Jayko

How the 1987 victory by the Socialist Workers Party in its lawsuit against U.S. spy agencies expanded use of the Bill of Rights and increased the confidence of working people that you can be political, hold convictions against the government, and it's your right to do so and act upon them. **\$18.95**



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# Book on Chinese-Cuban generals presented in Cuba

## Students from China keen to learn about Chinese in Cuba's revolutionary history

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

TARARA, Cuba—More than 200 Chinese youth studying Spanish here in Cuba listened with keen interest to a panel presenting the book *Our History Is Still Being Written*, which tells the story of three generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces who are of Chinese descent.

The three generals—Gustavo Chui, Armando Choy, and Moisés Sío Wong—along with Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the book, all spoke at the February 23 event. The Chinese students are going to school in Tarará or in nearby Cojimar, towns on the eastern outskirts of Havana. There are nearly 1,900 Chinese students in Cuba today, about 1,100 of them studying Spanish at Tarará, which in prerevolutionary Cuba was a wealthy resort enclave. They are on scholarships, with the Cuban government paying all their expenses here.

Some 30 leaders of the Chinese associations based in Havana's Chinatown also attended the meeting, along with professors from the University of Havana's Spanish-language department who are responsible for the school and the Chinese-Cuban Studies program.

After a welcome delivered in Spanish by Wang Silu, one of the students here, the book and the speakers were introduced by Iraida Aguirrechu, a senior editor at Editora Política, the publishing house of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba. Aguirrechu participated in the interviews that make up the book, published by Pathfinder Press in English and Spanish, and helped at every stage of the book's production.

She noted that a Chinese edition of *Our History Is Still Being Written* was recently published in Beijing (see article on page 3 on the March 13 book launch there) and added that a Cuban edition published by Editora Política will come out this year with a run size of 10,000.

As teenagers growing up in different regions of Cuba in the 1950s, Chui, Choy, and Sío Wong each joined the revolutionary movement, led by the Rebel Army and July 26 Movement, that mobilized working people to overthrow the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in January 1959. Each of them continues to shoulder important leadership responsibilities to this day.

Chui is part of the national leadership of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution and president of the Chung Wah Casino, the main Chinese association in Chinatown. Choy is re-



Militant/Ben Joyce

**Gen. Armando Choy, speaking February 23, recounts how he and others became involved in the revolutionary struggle that led to Cuba becoming "a truly free and sovereign nation." Other panelists at presentation of *Our History Is Still Being Written*, held in Tarará, near Havana, are, from left: Mary-Alice Waters, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sío Wong.**

sponsible for the administration of the Port of Havana. Sío Wong, who retired last year as president of the National Institute of State Reserves, is president of the Cuba-China Friendship Association.

Describing the content of the book, Waters told the youthful audience that the life stories of the three young rebels help us all to understand, "What is a socialist revolution? Where do men and women like the Five Heroes of the Cuban Revolution, unjustly imprisoned in the United States, come from? What gives them such strength, such capacity to resist?"

The book, which is in fact "an introduction to the Cuban Revolution," Waters said, was published by Pathfinder Press "because working people and youth in the United States whose minds are open to the world need to know this history."

She noted the broad reception the book has enjoyed. Some 8,000 copies have been sold in the three years since the book was first published, she reported, and more than 60 meetings to discuss it have taken place in 43 cities in the United States, Canada, Australia, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Venezuela, and Cuba, attended by about 5,000 people.

It has drawn particular interest among Chinese and other Asian Americans—a sizable and growing population in the United States, "among the tens of millions of immigrants from all over the world who are today placing their stamp on politics in the United States," said Waters.

She cited the afterword in the Chi-

nese edition, written by translator Wang Lusha, who expresses the pride felt by many young Chinese when they read the book and learn for the first time of the outstanding role of Chinese immigrants in Cuba's revolutionary history, and begin to understand why a socialist revolution is necessary to create the economic conditions for the fight to eliminate racial discrimination and other forms of oppression to be successful.

### Role of Chinese in Cuba's struggles

Gustavo Chui, whose father was born in China and whose mother was Black, explained how growing up in capitalist Cuba he encountered racial discrimination against both Blacks and Chinese. The Chinese community itself, he noted, was class-divided, with rich and poor.

The large numbers of Chinese, brought to Cuba in the 19th century as indentured laborers, "became part of the Cuban nationality through their struggles, from the independence struggle against Spain to today," Chui said.

Armando Choy highlighted the unique role played by Chinese combatants in the 1868 and 1895 independence wars against Spanish colonial rule. "There were entire battalions of Chinese fighters," he said, units of 500 or more. A measure of the respect they won as combatants, Choy explained, was that when revolutionary general Ignacio Agramonte was killed in combat, a unit of 72 soldiers, all Chinese, was chosen to go into hostile territory to retrieve his body.

He recounted how as young rebels he, like Chui and Sío Wong, joined the struggle against the Batista tyranny. But there were many more Chinese-Cubans in the Rebel Army, he noted. They fought until victory on "January 1, 1959, when Cuba became a truly free and sovereign nation." Sío Wong began his remarks by pointing out that they were meeting in Tarará, where before the revolution Blacks and Chinese had been excluded. After 1959 Tarará was turned into a recreational center for Cuban children, and following the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster it became a center for treating, free of charge, Ukrainian children affected by the radiation. Some victims of that disaster continue under medical care in Tarará while more recently it was used for Operation Miracle, a program offering eye surgery to patients from other Latin American countries suffering from cataracts.

"I am going to violate one of your rules here," Sío Wong said with a smile. "I know the rule is you're not allowed to speak Chinese here because you are studying Spanish. But we've brought copies of *Our History Is Still Being Written* in Chinese," he said as he displayed the cover of the Chinese edition.

"And I want to thank Pathfinder Press for spreading the truth about the Cuban Revolution—for many years—from inside the belly of the monster," Sío Wong said.

### Cuban Revolution's internationalism

He noted that revolutionary Cuba was the first Latin American country to recognize the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in September 1960, and fought for the PRC to take China's seat at the United Nations in 1971, replacing Taiwan.

Talking about the Cuban Revolution's internationalist combat missions, Sío Wong singled out the help given to "defend the independence of Angola, win the independence of Namibia, and defeat apartheid in South Africa."

This enormous effort, described in *Our History Is Still Being Written*, succeeded, he said, "because the more than 350,000 Cuban combatants went to Angola as volunteers. That mission strengthened the revolution enormously, it strengthened our consciousness."

Pointing to himself and the other two generals, Sío Wong said, "We experienced capitalism. But the majority of Cubans were born after the revolution. Those who went to Angola had the opportunity of seeing capitalism with their own eyes. And today we continue that experience with the doctors who are serving missions in Latin America and other regions."

At the end of the program, students swarmed the table where *Our History Is Still Being Written* was being sold, then crowded around the speakers' platform to get the autographs of the authors. They purchased 150 copies of the book in Spanish, and all copies available in Chinese and English, 45 and 25 respectively, plus a number of other Pathfinder titles. While a few students politely told the *Militant* they were not interested in the book, others said they were buying more than one copy in order to send some home to China as presents.

"I wasn't interested in Cuba before coming here to study," Yang Jing, 19, told the *Militant*. "Now I've gotten very interested in learning more about this country."

Dong Lei, 21, known here by her Spanish name Melodía, purchased not only *Our History Is Still Being Written* but a range of other books, from *How Far We Slaves Have Come* by Nelson Mandela and Fidel Castro, to *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* by Mary-Alice Waters.

"I knew little about Cuba before," Melodía said. "But the history of the Chinese in Cuba and of the Cuban Revolution is important." She had first seen Pathfinder books a week earlier at the Havana book fair, where she purchased several and learned of the event planned for Tarará. She asked her teachers at the school in Cojimar to arrange for a group of students from there to attend the event in Tarará, which they did.



Militant/Ben Joyce

**Students crowd sales table to buy *Our History Is Still Being Written* and other books. They snapped up more than 200 copies of that title in Spanish, Chinese, and English.**



# Israel boycotts and divestment serve as cover for anti-Semitism

BY PAUL PEDERSON

NEW YORK—The fifth annual “Israeli Apartheid Week” was held on campuses across the United States the first week in March. The activities are part of an international campaign to boycott businesses that have trade or other relations with Israel, and to sever ties between Israeli academic institutions and those in other countries.

The campaign has the backing of a range of groups that support the struggle of the Palestinian people against national oppression, including radi-

## AS I SEE IT

cal and socialist groups in the United States like the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and the Workers World Party.

The character of these activities—aimed increasingly at Jewish-owned businesses—is part of the deepening pattern of Jew-baiting and anti-Semitism in the middle-class left worldwide. It should be opposed.

At a February 10 panel discussion at Hunter College in New York, ISO leader Lichi D’Amelio appealed to students not to buy hummus produced by the company Sabra. After stating that the company gives money to the Israeli military, she also asserted that the chick-pea-based dip “is not even Jewish, but an Arab food.”

### Looting of Starbucks

Starbucks, whose owner is Jewish, has become a target of this campaign internationally. On January 10 some 200 protesters looted a Starbucks coffee shop near the Israeli embassy in London and attacked a number of businesses in the area. One proud participant posted a video of the looting

on YouTube under the header “How to really boycott Israeli products.”

Jew-hatred and anti-Semitism, a centuries old form of racism, has been used by ruling classes throughout history when their system faced a crisis. Modern anti-Semitism often comes draped in an anticapitalist and even socialist cloak. The real exploiters—the billionaire ruling families, whose great majority is non-Jewish—are replaced by a racist conspiracy that paints the Jews as the source of society’s problems.

The notion that Washington is a pawn of the Israeli lobby is a modern form of this anti-Jewish conspiracy theory. And those who promote it often use the term “Zionist movement” as a substitute for “Jew.”

As part of Israeli Apartheid Week a meeting was held at New York University titled “NYU-Tel Aviv University: A Partnership in Occupation.” Students, academics and others are presented as a “partner in occupation” simply because they study or teach at Tel Aviv University. And, by that logic, why is studying or teaching at NYU less of a threat to the interests of humanity. It also produces scientists, politicians, and military leaders who advance the bloody course of U.S. imperialism—a far greater threat to humanity than the Israeli capitalist state.

### Democratic, secular Palestine

The anti-Israel boycott campaign paints all Israelis as being the enemies of the Palestinian people. But that is false. The capitalist regime in Israel is the enemy of the Palestinian people, but it is also the enemy of Israel’s working people, Jewish and Palestinian. A growing percentage of Israeli citizens are Palestinian—today 20 percent, in a

generation or two, close to one-third.

Only a political program that appeals for a common struggle of all the oppressed and exploited—regardless of their national origin, or religious belief—can point the way forward. At the heart of that course is the call for a democratic, secular Palestine in which both Palestinians and Jews can live without state-supported religious restrictions.

The organizers of the current anti-Israel boycott compare it to the international campaign led by the African National Congress (ANC) as part of building support for the revolutionary struggle to overthrow apartheid in South Africa.

There are sweeping differences between the apartheid regime in South Africa and the capitalist regime in Israel—in terms of organization of labor, the character of the regimes, and the historical conditions under which they emerged. The attempt to paint them as the same simply obfuscates the real social and class relations in Israel and the tasks facing the toilers there to chart a revolutionary course forward. Applied to Israel the term “apartheid” is simply an epithet, rather than a scientific description of a social structure.

Perhaps the most glaring difference between the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa and the fight for Palestinian national rights today is the existence of a revolutionary organization—the ANC under Nelson Mandela—in the case of South Africa.

The Freedom Charter, the basic docu-

a democratic, non-racial state helped to break white South Africans away from supporting apartheid and join the freedom struggle.

In response, Ross said that he questioned whether it would benefit Palestinian students to terminate the study abroad program. Ross said “TAU is one of the few universities in Israel in which a discussion like this can be organized” involving Arab and Jewish students.

Anderson said he disagreed that there was space for such discussions at TAU.

Members of the audience booed a Jewish student when she asked if the panel supported “terrorist groups like Hamas shooting rockets into civilian neighborhoods in Israel.” Khoury answered that he had differences with Hamas and opposes religious government. “The resistance should be led by a secular movement,” he said. He also said that he opposed the killing of civilians, but that “under occupation, it’s resistance.”

Dan Fein, SWP candidate for New York City mayor, pointed out that NYU, like many large universities, receives funding from the U.S. government and does research that benefits U.S. imperialism. He noted the anti-Semitic character of the divestment campaign in that it ignores these facts and singles out Tel Aviv University.



PA Wire/Lewis Whyld

Protesters vandalize Starbucks in London January 10

ment of the ANC written in 1955, leads with the following call:

“We, the people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know: that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people.”

In contrast to that revolutionary perspective, the current leading forces in the Palestinian national movement—the Palestine Liberation Organization and Hamas, the Palestinian Islamist party that controls Gaza today—both have political programs that point in the opposite direction.

### Support for Hamas

Support for the anti-Israel boycott effort among radicals—like the members of the Workers World Party and the ISO—often goes along with increasingly open support for Hamas. As ISO leader D’Amelio said of Khaled Me-shal, the Hamas political bureau leader in Damascus, “There is little in what he says that I disagree with.”

The Hamas covenant, written in 1988, outlines the aims of that organization.

Speaking of the Jewish people, the document states, “With their money, they took control of the world media. . . . [T]hey stirred revolutions in various parts of the world with the purpose of achieving their interests and reaping the fruit therein. They were behind the French Revolution, the Communist revolution. . . . With their money they formed secret societies. . . . They were behind World War I, when they were able to destroy the Islamic Caliphate, making financial gains and controlling resources.”

Fatah likewise has renounced its former revolutionary democratic demand for a democratic, secular Palestine. Its leadership reflects the wealthy layer of Palestinians increasingly seeking an accommodation with imperialism and with Tel Aviv.

In the absence of any revolutionary perspective, campaigns such as the anti-Israel boycott can appear to be a radical substitute. But, as the crisis of capitalism deepens, the “anti-Israel” character of these campaigns is simply a modern form of Jew-hatred. All who genuinely support the battle for Palestinian national rights must oppose it.

## Campus meeting discusses ‘Israeli apartheid’

BY TOM BAUMANN

NEW YORK—More than 80 people attended a meeting at New York University entitled “NYU—Tel Aviv University: A Partnership in Occupation.” The NYU Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) organized the event to discuss ending the university’s study abroad program at Tel Aviv University.

The meeting was held in conjunction with similar activities in 40 cities around the world, during what has been called “Israel Apartheid Week.” The campaign equates Israel with the apartheid regime in South Africa, which was toppled by a democratic revolution in 1994.

The panel featured Elias Khoury, a Lebanese novelist, playwright, and journalist; Andrew Ross, professor and chair of the Social and Cultural Analysis department at NYU; and Nir Harel, member of Israel’s Anarchists Against The Wall, a group that organizes protests against the building of the wall in the West Bank.

The moderator, Charles Anderson, a member of SJP and former study-abroad student at Tel Aviv University (TAU), opened the program by describing ways in which he said TAU aids the Israel military. Anderson proposed that NYU terminate its study abroad program with TAU, comparing the tactic to the divestment campaign that mobilized interna-

tional support for the African National Congress (ANC) in its revolutionary struggle to end the apartheid system.

Ross said that, in preparing his presentation, he e-mailed professors at TAU to ask their opinion on the topic. One of the professors that responded explained that a pro-Palestinian petition was circulated to 9,000 academics in Israel during the recent Israeli assault on Gaza, which 400 signed—135 of them from TAU.

Khoury emphasized that Israel still occupies Gaza. He said Palestinians were justified in resisting this occupation, and should be supported. He also pointed to the fight by the Arab population inside Israel against discrimination.

In the discussion period, questions ranged from the potential importance of the election of Obama to the recent student occupation of the Kimmel Hall cafeteria by a group called Take Back NYU! That protest demanded, among other things, 13 annual scholarships for Palestinian students.

Another participant, Paul Mailhot of the Socialist Workers Party, described how the ANC led a revolutionary democratic movement in South Africa to overturn apartheid, which is not the type of movement either Hamas or the Palestinian Liberation Organization are leading today. The ANC’s call for



# Defend victory for workers' rights

The four-year extension of the federal disclosure exemption won by the Socialist Workers Party and its election campaign committees on March 19 is an important victory that helps defend the right of working-class parties and their candidates to participate in the political arena. Supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign and other defenders of workers' rights need to begin now to lay the groundwork to defend this exemption when it comes up for review at the end of 2012.

The Federal Election Commission (FEC) ruling acknowledged that the evidence submitted by the SWP established that having to report the names of campaign contributors to the government every three months could lead to harassment from federal, state, and local governments, as well as other enemies of the working class.

For decades the government has used spies and informers to try to identify supporters of the party and harass and victimize them. Employers have used information ferreted out by the rulers' spies to attack and fire socialists and other militant workers from their jobs. The exemption is an important precedent that can be used by others to defend their right to participate in politics, including the electoral arena.

In the 1970s and '80s, the ability of the FBI and other spy agencies to carry out their dirty deeds was substantially pushed back by the mass struggles for Black rights, against the Vietnam War, and for the rights of women. These social movements created a climate that forced into public view revelations of spying and disruption aimed against political and union activities leading back to the 1930s. The Socialist Workers Party helped lead this effort, winning a political and legal

campaign centered on a federal lawsuit, which the party won in 1987. The suit challenged FBI intrusion and disruption against the party and exposed extensive covert government activity against other organizations and social protest movements.

The government never accepted having limits on its spying and began immediately to seek avenues to reestablish it. Washington's effort to establish a legal basis for spying and disruption escalated substantially after Sept. 11, 2001. Using the proclaimed need to defend "homeland security" against "terrorism," they expanded the FBI and other spy agencies, dramatically increased electronic surveillance, developed a widespread network of collaboration with local "red squads," and cooperated with local agencies to send informants and provocateurs into a broad spectrum of political groups.

In granting the current extension to the SWP campaign, the FEC argued that harassment of supporters of the SWP has "lessened" and cut the duration of the extension to four years—in spite of a letter by the SWP campaign's attorneys that explained that the current submission against disclosing the names of contributors and vendors was as strong, if not stronger, than the one submitted six years ago.

Groundwork is being laid to attempt to eliminate the SWP exemption when it expires at the end of 2012. Supporters of Socialist Workers election campaigns can help to defend this acquisition. If you are subject to hostility or harassment because of your political activity and support of the Socialist Workers campaigns, contact the SWP National Campaign Committee: [soc-worknatlcamp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:soc-worknatlcamp@sbcglobal.net). Help prepare now for the fight to come.

# Production and trade in rapid decline

Continued from page 3

company, Renault, slashed production in the last quarter of 2008 by 50 percent, closing plants and laying off thousands of workers.

World trade is rapidly declining faster than production. Germany's exports are down 20 percent from a year ago; Japan's have plunged 46 percent. In the United States, exports in January dropped for the sixth straight month. According to Bloomberg News, "U.S. industrial companies suffered what the National Association of Manufacturers calls an unprecedented drop of 20 percent or more in business investment, exports, and durable goods ordered at the end of last year."

In China, where much of production is geared toward sales abroad, exports in February declined more than 25 percent compared to a year ago. This is the country's fourth consecutive monthly drop, with millions of factory workers being laid off. Imports also declined sharply, falling by 24 percent in February.

In Cambodia, companies from abroad had set up almost 300 factories employing 340,000 workers, many of them women from the countryside, since the mid-1990s. Now tens of thousands are being thrown

out of work. Garment workers are paid an average of \$2.70 a day. According to one of the country's labor unions, Chea Mony, some 70,000 workers have been laid off since last year and another 100,000 jobs may be cut over the next two years, reported the *Washington Post*.

Garments are Cambodia's biggest export, with some 70 percent of the clothing produced going to the United States. In January, U.S. imports of these garments dropped by nearly 40 percent. The Cambodian government says that 30 percent of the population is living in poverty, which it defines as surviving on less than \$1 a day.

In another development, the Treasury Department announced March 23 its latest scheme to bail out the banks—the Public-Private Investment Program. Under this plan the federal government will give as much as \$1 trillion to hedge funds and other "investors," which includes those managing pension funds, to buy so-called toxic assets from banks. While the private firms purchase these unwanted securities, the federal government will provide more than 90 percent of the funds needed to "invest."

# LETTERS

## Boycott Israel actions

I write to get some clarity on Israel boycott actions now making their way onto U.S. campuses and elsewhere. What should be said to activists who argue that the campaign follows in the footsteps of the anti-apartheid campaigns that often involved boycotts and protests against South African sports teams, etc.?

August Nimtz

Minneapolis, Minnesota

[See "As I See It" column on page 10. —Editor]

## Prison business booming

While the rest of the nation suffers an economic downturn,

private prison corporations continue to experience a boom. The Federal Bureau of Prisons had 13 prisons built for private management in the last 10 years. These have largely housed low-security-risk "illegal" immigrants.

### 'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

The Prisoners' Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked "Prisoners' Fund" to 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

Forty-six states face bankruptcy in 2009. President Obama is expected to bail them out so they can continue imprisoning more of his countrymen. Private prisons appear to be a New Deal industry. So much for "change."

A prisoner  
Florida

**The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.**

# Israeli gov't

Continued from front page

right-wing parties.

Netanyahu previously won commitments from the third place Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel Is Our Home) party and the small rightist Shas party.

On March 24 the fourth-place social-democratic Labor Party, led by Ehud Barak, the current defense minister, agreed to join the Netanyahu-led coalition, in spite of opposition by many in Labor. Defections by Labor members of parliament could still leave Likud with a slim margin.

Kadima leader Tzipi Livni, the current foreign minister, has rejected Netanyahu's offer to join the coalition, saying she would not serve in a "right-wing extremist government under Likud."

The United Arab List, Balad, and Hadash, three predominantly Israeli Arab-based parties in the parliament, won 10 seats in the elections, but are not part of negotiations to form the new government.

## No more 'Greater Israel'

All the main bourgeois political parties based in the Jewish population in Israel recognize that a "Greater Israel" including large parts of the West Bank, much less the Gaza Strip, is no longer possible.

Most, including Likud, Kadima, Yisrael Beiteinu, and Labor, say they are in favor of some kind of "two-state" solution: a Palestinian state, with a police force but no army and the Israeli government still in control of its airspace, side by side with a Jewish state.

But the parties don't agree on how to do that or what its borders should be. Neither do they have confidence that this would permanently block the aspiration of Palestinians to return to lands that were taken away from them since the creation of Israel in 1948, or end the struggle against racist discrimination inside Israel itself.

Yisrael Beiteinu's Avigdor Lieberman, who is expected to be the new foreign minister, has provoked the biggest controversy. He calls for incorporating into Israel areas of the West Bank occupied by Jewish settlers, while separating some predominantly Arab parts of Israel, including sections of Jerusalem, and placing them under the control of the Palestinian Authority. Kadima's Livni has supported this. Other parties say that Israel should never give up any part of Jerusalem.

There are also disagreements over the power of government-funded religious courts. Rabbinical courts for Jews, Sharia courts for Muslims, and separate courts for Christians and Druze have exclusive jurisdiction in marriage and in most cases, divorce. Civil unions are not recognized. Thousands of Russian immigrants, who are a key base of support for Lieberman, are not recognized as Jewish by the rabbinical court, and therefore unable to marry.

Jews, Muslims, and Christians cannot intermarry. If they can afford to, some who can't marry by the religious courts get married outside Israel. Their marriage is then recognized under civil law when they return.

Lieberman campaigned that he would support "civil unions" in some cases, but rapidly threw his pledge overboard so that Netanyahu could keep the rightist Shas party, which opposes any loosening of marriage laws, in the emerging coalition.

In its latest issue, the U.S.-based *Jewish Forward* published an opinion piece titled "Avigdor Lieberman's Bright Idea." Written by Hebrew University of Jerusalem professor Sergio DellaPergola, the article is not tongue in cheek.

DellaPergola backs Lieberman's land-and-people swap. This is not a "far-right" idea, he writes, noting that Labor Party leader Barak said in 2002 "such an exchange makes demographic sense and is not inconceivable."

The professor notes that while Israel's 1.4 million Arabs are at least 20 percent of the inhabitants of the country today, "25 percent of all births in Israel are to Arab families." He worries that by 2020 the Arab population could be 30 percent and Israel would become a "bi-national state" not the "Jewish state that most Israelis prefer."

Israeli Arabs have waged hundreds, if not thousands, of struggles over the past decades to take on widespread discrimination, the continued occupation of the West Bank and assaults on the Gaza Strip, and evictions of Palestinians from their homes and land. In many of these fights they have won significant support from Jewish Israelis.